



Description Of The County And The Fire Protection District

Ventura County Overview

Ventura County was formed in 1873 from Santa Barbara County and is home to beautiful, livable communities with unique characteristics. Many have names that reflect the native Chumash Indian, Spanish and Mexican heritage of the area. Early Spanish settlers described the area as the “land of everlasting summers” and named the region “San Buenaventura”, which means “good fortune.” The 10 incorporated cities in Ventura County are Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, San Buenaventura (Ventura), Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks.

Each city has distinct features that make their communities stand out. From the natural beauty of the terrain to mild climates with diverse recreational opportunities, the cities offer safe neighborhoods and family-oriented communities that make for a satisfying lifestyle.

Ventura County Geography

- Covers an area of 1,873 square miles, including 43 miles of coastline.
- Located northwest of Los Angeles County, and bordered by Kern County to the north, Santa Barbara County to the west, and the Pacific Ocean on the southwest.
- 7.5 miles of shoreline are public beaches and 411 acres are State beach parks.
- The Los Padres National Forest accounts for 860 square miles of the northern portion of the county (46% of the county’s land mass.)
- Elevation ranges from sea level to the highest point on Mount Pinos at 8,831 feet.
- Ventura County ranks 26th in land size among California’s 58 counties.
- Gateway to Channel Islands National Park, one of only four designated national marine sanctuaries composed of five tranquil islands located a few miles off the Ventura County coast, comprising a 250,000-acre wilderness preserve/marine sanctuary.

Demographics of Ventura County

- Population of 742,000 makes Ventura County the 12th most populous county in the State of California.
- Median household income in Ventura County consistently exceeds national and state levels; median family income in 1999 estimated at \$61,944.



- 63.8% of households in Ventura County with \$35,000+ income.
- Median home price (May 2005) - \$667,130.

Climate of Ventura County

- Coastal areas offer a Mediterranean climate often described as the best in the world, with average annual temperatures of 74.2 degrees.
- Ventura County's mountains, valleys and seashore give the area six different microclimates, more than any other county in the nation.

Ventura County Fire Protection District

Ventura County Fire Protection District (VCFPD) has 32 fire stations, communications center, training center and three support facilities. 33 fire engines, 2 ladder trucks, 2 paramedic squads, 2 wildland fire crews, 3 bulldozers, with many other specialized response vehicles. The VCFPD serves the cities of Camarillo, Moorpark, Ojai, Port Hueneme, Thousand Oaks, and Simi Valley, as well as the unincorporated areas of the county.

Wildland Fire Protection Strategy

Prevention

The most effective way to limit damage and loss due to wildfire is to prevent all but the most blatant ignitions due to arson or unforeseeable circumstances. The focus of the entire department is on prevention through educational programs, permits for hazardous operations and mass appeals. These initiatives are focused on awareness of fire causes, fire spread potential and the total costs and effects of fire damage. Moreover, while not intended to be punitive, the cost recovery program reinforces these lessons and encourages caution and safety in those living and doing business in Ventura County.

Passive Protection

When the inevitable wildfire does occur, the primary protection of life and property will come from passive protection such as defensible space (fuel reduction), fire-resistive landscaping, fire-resistive construction and good housekeeping. Sufficient fire fighting water must be on site for use by the property owner and/or the fire department. Moreover, residents must have the means of self-evacuating and escaping danger through safe and sufficient egress routes while maintaining appropriate ingress routes for responding fire equipment.





The sum effect of passive protection is a force multiplier for active fire fighting resources. A single fire fighting resource may protect many more structures when passive protection is properly employed. In some cases, fire fighting resources may not be necessary at all thus freeing them for other uses.

Fire Suppression

The most effective time to control a wildfire is in the incipient stages when intensities are lower and the perimeter is short. The combined resource attack is a coordinated suppression effort including ground assets (engines, crews & dozers), aviation assets (fixed and rotary wing), passive fire protection measures, and command elements. Using in-place passive fire protection systems, incident commanders weave the varied active fire suppression assets into an aggressive and coordinated fire fighting effort.

Fuel Bed Management

Aggressive prevention and suppression policies can artificially age fuel beds to a point of uncontrollable volatility. Fuel beds are managed to reduce the age and expanses of volatile fuel and provide barriers between values at risk and large areas of hazardous fuel. Particular attention is given to those areas in fuel beds that are adjacent to the interface.

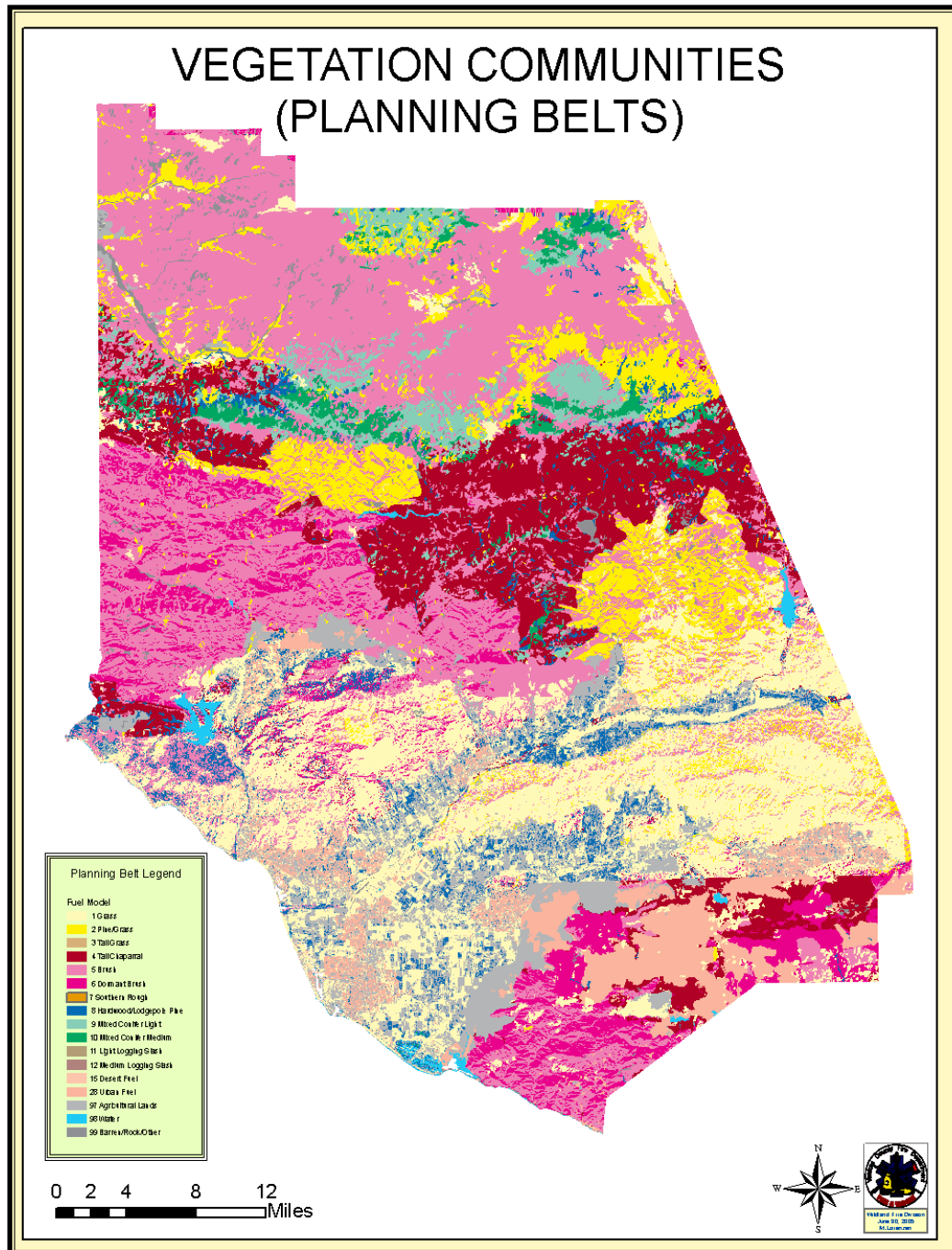
One of the first steps in the hazard assessment process is the development of vegetation coverage maps and corresponding fuel rankings. The initial evaluation begins with identifying the vegetative communities that exist within the County. Having established a base from which to evaluate the available fuels, additional efforts are made to evaluate the hazards generated by these fuels in combination with other factors. The rankings depicted on the Hazard Fuels Ranking Map below are based on a combination of factors that affect fire behavior including the fuel type, slope and presence of ladder and crown fuels.

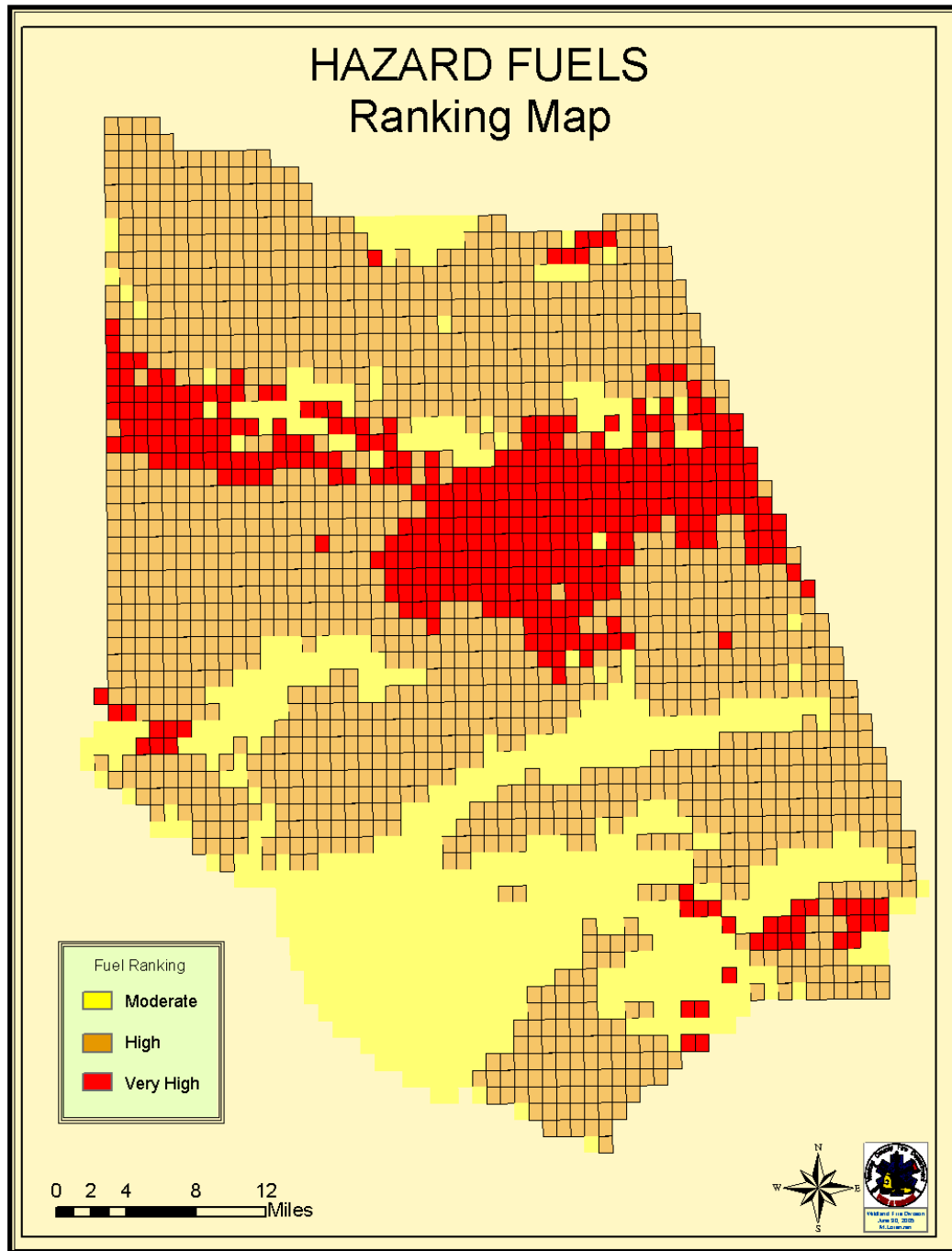
As part of the Fire Plan, methodology was developed for analyzing Assets at Risk (AAR). For each AAR, geographic areas will be ranked based on the potential impacts of a large fire event. This provides a series of displays of spatial

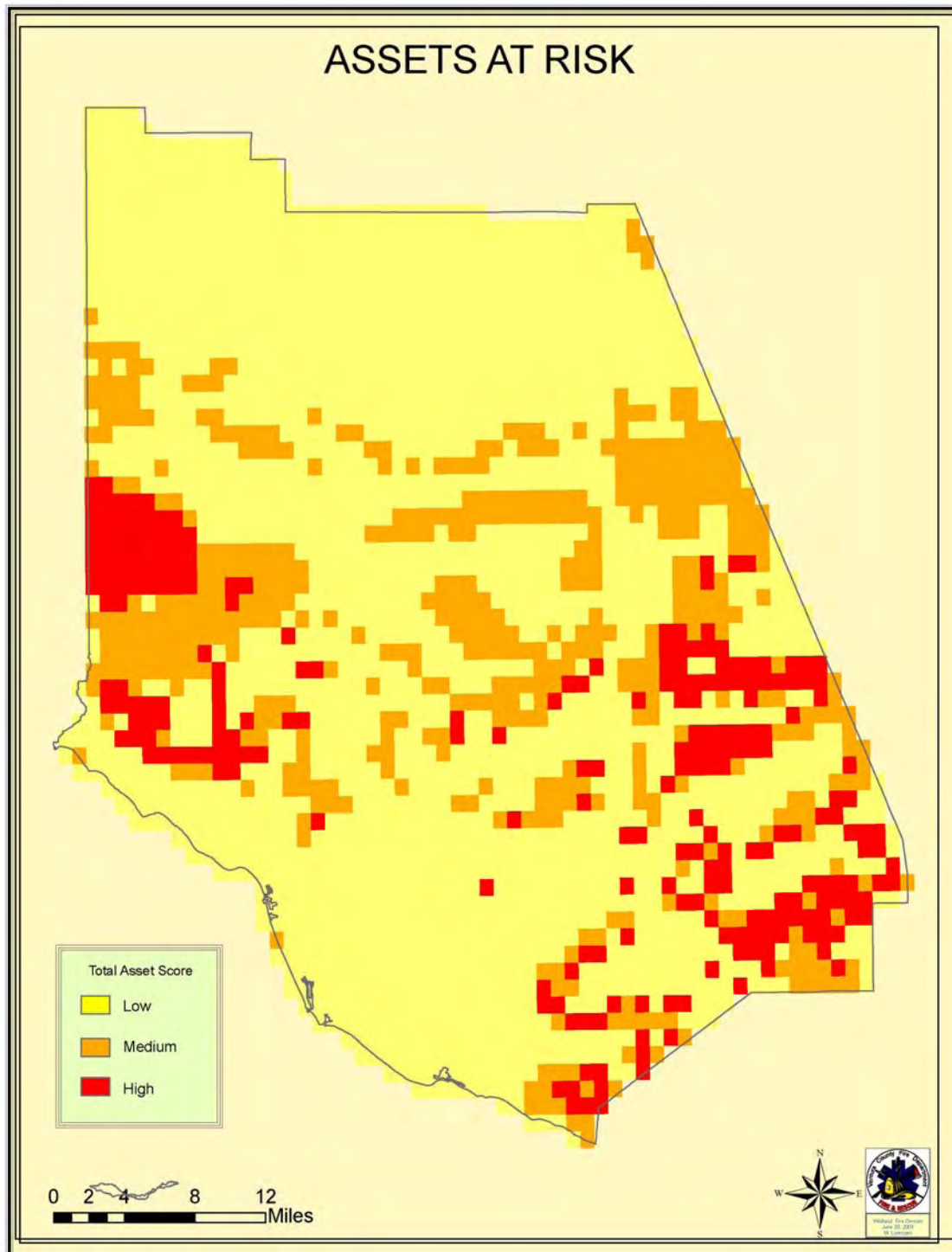


rankings to assist in the identification of “high value” areas. Additional data related to fuels, weather, and level of service will be used to rank areas in terms of the likelihood or “risk” of a large fire event. This data provides the basis for identification of “high value/high risk” areas. As such, the analysis serves as a pointer as to where pre-fire projects might have the highest benefit in terms of reduction of potential damages.

Assets susceptible to fire damage are identified in the Fire Plan as air quality, range, recreation, structures, timber, water and watersheds, wildlife and habitat, and other resources (cultural, historic, and scenic). For purposes of this plan greater weight was given to the protection of structures and infrastructure. Additional assessment maps will be available to assist in locating future pre-fire projects once adequate data is available to evaluate ignition starts and successes and severe fire weather patterns.









Collaborative Efforts Between Partner Agencies and Cooperators

Fire knows no boundaries and accordingly, neither should a plan that seeks to reduce the risks from wildland fires. Collaboration is vital in developing a plan that helps us to protect our communities and assets at risk.

Other agencies and stakeholders, which VCFPD works closely with, are:

<u>Political Entity</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERVISORS	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
LOS ANGELES, CITY OF	LOCAL GOVERNMENT/ LRA FIRE PROTECTION
LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT	LRA AND SRA FIRE PROTECTION
CONEJO OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION AGENCY	OPEN SPACE CONSERVATOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, DPA FIRE PROTECTION
CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, SRA FIRE PROTECTION
SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, RECREATIONAL USE
CONEJO & SIMI REC. & PARK DISTRICTS	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, RECREATIONAL USE
LOCAL WATER COMPANIES	WATER STORAGE & TREATMENT
NON-PROFIT OPEN SPACE DISTRICTS	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMPANIES	STATE/COUNTY
CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF FORESTRY	STATE/COUNTY
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT	STATE/COUNTY
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME	STATE/COUNTY
USDA-SOILS CONSERVATION	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
U.S FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Stakeholders

<u>Political Entity</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>
THOUSAND OAKS, CITY OF	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ROCKETDYNE	PRIVATE/FEDERAL LAND OWNERSHIP
SIMI VALLEY, CITY OF	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, RECREATIONAL USE
AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY	PRIVATE LAND/FARMING
VENTURA COUNTY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION	PRIVATE LAND/RANGE MANAGEMENT
WATERSHED FIRE COUNCIL	STATE/COUNTY
CALTRANS	STATE/COUNTY
ADVISORY COUNCILS	STATE/COUNTY
INSURANCE INDUSTRY	STATE/COUNTY
SERVICE CLUBS (KIWANIS/LIONS)	STATE/COUNTY
WATERSHED FIRE COUNCIL	STATE/COUNTY



LOCAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE	COUNTY
LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS	COUNTY
LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT	COUNTY
HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATIONS	COUNTY
DEVELOPERS AND BUILDERS	COUNTY
PROPERTY MANAGERS	COUNTY
PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTER ASSOCIATIONS	COUNTY
YOUTH GROUPS (4-H, FFA, BOY SCOUTS)	COUNTY
ARCHITECTS	COUNTY
LOCAL NURSERIES	COUNTY
AMERICAN RED CROSS	COUNTY

Fire Safe Councils

Fire Safe Councils utilize the combined expertise, resources and distribution channels of its members, the Fire Safe Councils fulfills its mission to preserve Ventura County's natural and manmade resources by mobilizing all residences to make their homes and neighborhoods and communities fire safe.

Ojai Fire Safe Council
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Ventura-Malibu Fire Safe Council
Thomas White, chair
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